

TANZAEMON: Lord Shunkan. Cease your weeping! It is I, Tanzaemon Motoyasu!

CHANTER:

With these words, Tanzaemon now enters.

*Wave drum patterns. Tanzaemon walks to the prow of the boat and down the gangplank. He bows to Senoo. Four of his retainers walk in unison to stage left and sit on their right knees.*

TANZAEMON: I should have announced it earlier, but I have held back until now so that you may know to your very marrow the beneficence and goodwill of Lord Shigemori, councillor to Lord Kiyomori.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, listen to me carefully.

CHANTER:

From his breast fold  
he removes a document.

TANZAEMON:

“Hear ye! Hear ye! Be it known that  
Lord Shigemori, keeper of the privy seal,  
out of his great compassion  
has seen fit to allow the exiled prisoner,  
Lord Shunkan, to return as far as Bizen,  
though not to the capital itself.  
Signed, Noritsune, Governor of Noto,  
Nephew to Lord Kiyomori.”

CHANTER:

Even before the reading is over—

SHUNKAN (*Joyfully*): What? All three of us are pardoned?

*Shunkan tries to move forward to the left but is too overcome to make any progress. He crawls a step or two, then his friends come to help him, supporting him as, in time to the shamisen, he struggles several steps to Tanzaemon [figure 3.63].*

TANZAEMON: Indeed!

*He turns the paper so that the exiles can see the writing.*

SHUNKAN: Ah! Ah! Ah!

CHANTER:

He scrapes his head against the sand  
bowing deeper and deeper,  
overcome with tears of joy.

*Tanzaemon folds the papers and inserts them in his kimono.*

CHANTER:

Tanzaemon faces Senoo.

TANZAEMON: We have no reason to remain here any longer. Let us embark and leave this island quickly.

SENOO: Fortunately the wind is just right.

TANZAEMON: Attention! The guards will please escort the pardoned exiles onto the boat!

11. Shigemori (1137–1179), Kiyomori's son, often attempted to moderate his father's excesses.

BOATMEN: Aye, aye!

TANZAEMON'S RETAINERS: Come now!

ALL THE RETAINERS: To the boat!

*Tanzaemon turns to board the boat. The three exiles and Chidori form a line at right center to go on board, Shunkan at the head.*

CHANTER:

Exchanging joyful words,  
the pardoned company approach  
the boarding plank.

But Senoo now raises his voice  
to stop them.

*As the foursome moves left, Senoo steps in front of them and strikes Shunkan with his fan. Two cracks of the wooden clappers accent the blow, and the line instantly falls in disarray to the ground. Tanzaemon, who had put one foot on the rock under the plank, turns and moves to the right of the gangplank.*

SENOO: Hold it, you shabby creatures! (*Addressing Chidori*) If you're seeing someone off, you can go no farther, since you're not fit to board this boat. You'd better get out of here right now if you know what's good for you!

NARITSUNE: No! It's all right! Leave her alone! During my period of exile I have become greatly indebted to this girl and was recently wed to her. I have made an unbreakable promise to her that if I were allowed to return to the capital, she could return there with me. Please be kind enough to take us with you to the first port of call. We will be eternally indebted to you for this kindness.

SENOO (*Raising his fan threateningly*): Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! The very idea of taking this woman along in addition to you exiles is preposterous! Men! Get rid of this filthy creature!

SENOO'S RETAINERS: Yes, sir!

CHANTER: A jangle of harsh sounds is heard.

*Senoo's men cross behind the exiles and form a wall, standing with hands spread apart, fingers splayed, legs wide. Naritsune turns to them with outstretched arms to keep them back and then takes Chidori in his arms.*

NARITSUNE: Wait, wait, wait! Wait! Since you refuse to honor my request, I can do nothing. Therefore, you must leave me behind on this island and return to the capital without me. (*Shunkan looks at him*) My friends, Shunkan and Yasuyori, please board the boat.

*As he speaks, Chidori wipes away her tears.*

SHUNKAN: No, no! We have no intention of leaving this place without you.

YASUYORI: As Shunkan has said, we are one and will return only as one.



FIGURE 3.63. Shunkan, supported by his friends, moves toward Tanzaemon, who is refined looking in a light blue envoy costume (*ryūjin-maki*) and black lacquered hat (*samurai eboshi*), with light makeup. (Photo by Aoki Shinji.)